

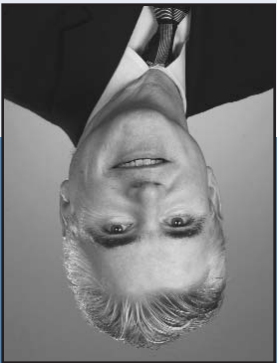
Dear Neighbor,

On July 29, 2005, one of the most horrific traffic accidents in our state's history occurred at the base of Avon Mountain, when an out of control dump truck crashed into cars waiting at a traffic light at the intersection of Routes 44 and 10. The accident, which claimed four lives and injured dozens, sent shockwaves throughout our community and heightened the awareness of motor vehicle and driver safety.

Please take a moment to read about some of the road and truck safety improvements being implemented on this roadway. It is my hope that we can use this tragic event as a catalyst to improve safety on Avon Mountain for every motorist who travels it.

If you have any questions regarding motor vehicle safety, the improvements being made to Avon Mountain or any other issue regarding state government, please contact me in Hartford at 1-800-842-1421, or at Thomas.Herlihy@cga.ct.gov.

Sincerely,



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State Senator

Thomas J. Herlihy

Avon Mountain Accident Task Force

In the days and weeks following the accident, local and state officials came together to begin working on plans to improve motor vehicle safety on Avon Mountain. Along with Senator Jonathan Harris of West Hartford, I called upon Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) for the immediate creation of the Avon Mountain Accident Task Force. This Task Force put local officials with everyday knowledge of safety conditions of Route 44 together with experts to identify immediate solutions to protect our families, friends and neighbors.

Safety Initiatives

Through the efforts of this Task Force and the leadership of Governor Rell, numerous safety improvements to the roadway were implemented prior to the start of the 2006 legislative session. Included was the expediting of the road improvement project that has already led to clearer signage and six speed enforcement areas. The \$7 million project will ultimately lead to additional lanes on both sides of Avon Mountain, and a wide painted median on the most sharply curved portions of the roadway.

Safety improvements are only part of the solution. Drivers must be more careful and obey all posted speed limits and traffic signals. Speed is the number one factor in highway accident fatalities. That is why I am an ardent supporter of speed control measures on Avon Mountain, making sure motorists are strictly following the rules of the road in a safe manner.

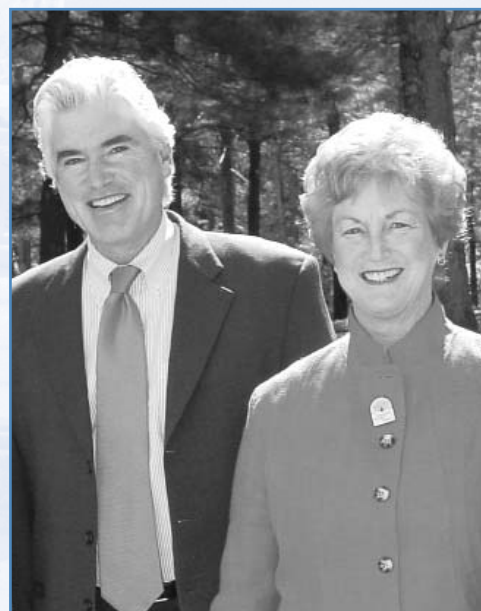
Insurance

As the accident investigation unfolded, it became quite clear that the dump truck owner failed to maintain insurance on that vehicle, or in a worst case scenario, knowingly failed to maintain insurance on that vehicle. While most truck, commercial truck, dump truck and fleet owners are prudent and responsible individuals, the investigation proved that some are not.

A new law that I co-sponsored creates a class D felony for an owner of a vehicle with a commercial registration who knowingly operates or permits the operation of a vehicle without the insurance required by law. A person guilty of a class D felony faces imprisonment up to five years, a fine up to \$ 5,000, or both. This bill lets those that don't meet the standard, that aren't ethical in the conduct of their business, that don't maintain insurance on their vehicles, know that there will be serious consequences. The move to make it a Class D felony is significant, and those who are unwilling to follow the laws of the State of Connecticut will be heavily fined or will face jail terms.

Driver Competency

One of my most important initiatives this session addresses the issue of driver competency. This is in direct response to the allegation that the driver of the dump truck involved in last summer's accident had been fired from his job only days earlier for his inability to handle a truck of the size he was driving on the day of the crash. Under the new law that I authored, all newly employed truck drivers in our state must be given a road test and written certification by their new employer that they have the knowledge, skill, and competency to drive their vehicle safely.



Truck Safety Initiatives

The Avon Mountain tragedy also led to new laws pertaining to truck safety. This year I sponsored legislation that now allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to order any motor carrier with an unsatisfactory safety rating to cease operations until it receives a satisfactory rating. Motor carriers are currently subject to an array of state and federal regulations. Under the new law, a process for assigning a safety rating to all motor carriers will be based on a number of factors, including accident history and the number of previous safety violations.

Another new law calls for the hiring of nine new truck inspectors, whose ultimate responsibility will be to keep trucks like the one involved in last year's crash off the road.

